

FORGING THE FUTURE:



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11 April 2003

"Leadership, Partnership, and Championship"

MAY—NATIONAL HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EDUCATION MONTH

Preventing and Controlling High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure increases your chance (or risk) for getting heart disease and/or kidney disease, and for having a stroke. It is especially dangerous because it often has no warning signs or symptoms. Regardless of race, age, or gender, anyone can develop high blood pressure. It is estimated that one in every four American adults has high blood pressure. Once high blood pressure develops, it usually lasts a lifetime. You can prevent and control high blood pressure by taking action.

Detection

You can find out if you have high blood pressure by having your blood pressure checked regularly. Most doctors will diagnose a person with high blood pressure on the basis of two or more readings, taken on several occasions. A consistent blood pressure reading of 140/90 mm Hg or higher is considered high blood pressure, another term for hypertension.

Prevention

You can take steps to prevent high blood pressure by adopting a healthy lifestyle. These steps include maintaining a healthy weight; being physically active; following a healthy eating plan, that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods; choosing and preparing foods with less salt and sodium; and, if you drink alcoholic beverages, drinking in moderation.

Treatment

It is important to take steps to keep your blood pressure under control. The treatment goal is blood pressure below 140/90 and lower for people with other conditions, such as diabetes and kidney disease. Adopting the healthy lifestyle habits listed above for preventing high blood pressure are also an effective first step in controlling high blood pressure. If lifestyle changes alone are not effective in keeping your pressure controlled, it may be necessary to add blood pressure medications. For more information, contact your health care provider.

Source: "Your Guide to Lowering Your Blood Pressure," National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/>.

Heart Association Urges Federal Ban on Ephedra

By Guy Gugliotta

Washington Post Staff Writer

Friday, April 4, 2003; Page A02



The American Heart Association urged the federal government yesterday to ban sales of the herbal supplement ephedra, saying the dangers of using it far outweigh any possible benefits it could have as a weight loss aid or workout enhancer.

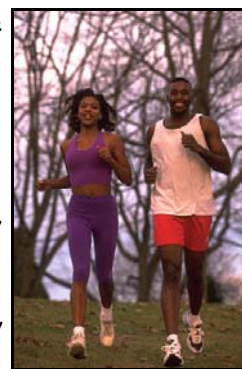
"Ephedra has been associated with a remarkable risk profile," the association said in a formal statement submitted to the Food and Drug Administration. It cited "growing literature" linking use of ephedra -- a powerful natural stimulant -- to a variety of serious side effects, including hypertension, irregular heartbeat, seizure, heart attack, stroke and death. For additional information visit: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A23466-2003Apr3?language=printer>

Source: [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

6 Great Reasons to Get Active

Being physically active can improve your health and well-being in many ways. Physical activity:

1. Reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.
2. Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
3. Improves your stamina, flexibility and strength--especially important as you age.
4. Reduces anxiety and depression.
5. Helps you control your weight, develop lean muscle, and reduce body fat.
6. Promotes improvements in mood and feelings of well-being.



Source: U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health

"To be capable of steady friendship or lasting love, are the two greatest proofs; not only of goodness of heart, but of strength of mind." - William Hazlitt